

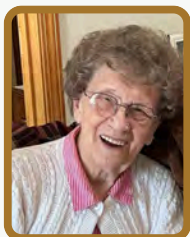
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CELEBRATING  
MONTANA'S  
CENTENARIANS



55TH GOVERNOR'S  
CONFERENCE ON  
AGING

★



## Dorothy Mundt 100 Years Old

Dorothy, a native of Westby, Montana, was born on February 17, 1924. After completing her high school education, she married Sam Hammer and raised four children. A trailblazer in her field, Dorothy spent most of her career as an Immigration Inspector, making history as the first woman to hold this position on the Montana-Canada border. A lifelong abstainer from alcohol and tobacco, and a dedicated consumer of whole foods, Dorothy credits her healthy lifestyle for her longevity. She currently makes her home in Whitefish, Montana.



## Jean F. DuPaul 100 Years Old

Born on September 6, 1924, in Williston, North Dakota, Jean was raised on a farm with her two sisters. After graduating high school and a semester of college, she briefly taught in a one-room schoolhouse with four students before marrying Walter DePaul. Together they welcomed nine children. Seeking better opportunities, the family relocated to Great Falls, Montana in 1962. Jean recalls the birth of her twins while caring for a sick child as a defining moment in her life. She credits motherhood as the key to her longevity.



## Helena Stefaniak 100 Years Old

Helena was born in Warsaw, Poland on February 25, 1924. Helena's youth was tragically interrupted by the German Nazi occupation. Forced to continue her education in a clandestine homeschool setting, her life took a harrowing turn in 1944 when she was abducted from the streets of Warsaw and sent to a German forced labor camp. Separated from her beloved sister, Barbara, Helena endured years of uncertainty and fear. Their eventual reunion in 1947, after the war's end, was the most joyous moment of her life. Immigrating to the United States, Helena found love with John Stefaniak and together they raised a child. A dedicated homemaker, she also contributed to her family's livelihood by working in the garment industry. She attributes her longevity to a simple philosophy: embracing life's pleasures, including her love of sweets, without the constraints of restrictive diets. The photo, a testament to her enduring bond with Barbara (on left), captures the joy and resilience that have defined Helena's remarkable journey. Today, Helena resides in Helena, her spirit as vibrant as ever.



## Betty Mocabee 102 Years Old

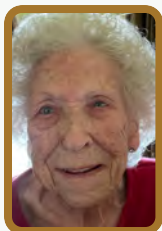
Betty was born a New Year's baby on January 1, 1922. She currently resides in Charlo, Montana.



## Daisy Dutton 100 Years Old

Daisy was born in Sumatra, Montana on August 4, 1924. She has lived a life filled with resilience, love and unwavering faith. She graduated from Garfield County High School in 1942. During WWII, Daisy was a "Rosie the Riveter", working in a B-24 assembly plant in San Diego. She installed wiring in the wings and signed the 500th B-24 inside the bomb bay. Her future husband, Joseph Dutton, saw her signature while stationed in Italy. Daisy married Joseph in 1946 and together they raised five children on the Dutton Ranch west of Sand Springs. In 1948, life presented a challenge, as their ranch house burned down as Daisy was ready to deliver their eldest son. This forced them to live in a sheep wagon where their young children learned to adapt. Her eldest daughter had to learn to walk because there was no room to crawl. After several months they were able to move into a partially completed house on the ranch. Daisy's adaptability shone through many times while operating the Sand Springs Store and frequently welcoming stranded travelers until the weather cleared. A woman of deep faith and boundless love, Daisy's family is her greatest treasure including all the nieces, nephews and neighbors she mothered. With a motto of "We'll see" and a favorite verse from Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths," she has faced life's challenges with grace and determination. Daisy's secret to longevity is faith, hard work and having the love of her family. She has proven time and again that adversity cannot dim her light, and her legacy of resilience and compassion will continue to inspire generations to come.





## Adeline Carpenter 100 Years Old

Born in Glendive, Montana on July 29, 1924, Adeline completed her education through the eighth grade and dedicated her life to homemaking. A beloved matriarchal figure, she is affectionately known as “Auntie” to her many nieces and nephews.



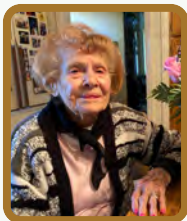
## Charles Joseph Hucke 100 Years Old

Charles was born in Broadview, Montana on November 11, 1923. He served his country during WWII with the US Army AirCorps. His bravery was tested when his fighter plane was shot down and he became a prisoner of war in Germany. The most profound moment of his life, he says, was his liberation from a prison hospital in Heppenheim, Germany. Returning home, Charles married Dorothy in 1948. Together they built a family with four children. In the early 60s, with a degree in Business from the University of Montana, Charles and a partner bought Timberweld Manufacturing. He was heavily involved in running the business along with sales and marketing. When Charles was 60 he bought out his partner and ran the business as its President. When he turned 80 he turned over the business to his son, Doug, though Charles continued to work into his early 90s. A lover of the outdoors, he has spent countless hours hunting, fishing, skiing, camping and backpacking. His adventurous spirit extended to the skies where he piloted his own plane throughout his career. Charles’ commitment to a healthy lifestyle has been a cornerstone of his long life. He has never smoked or drank, attributing his longevity to hard work and the enduring love of family and friends.



## Dr. Donald Harr 100 Years Old

Donald was born on October 30, 1923 in Emporia, Kansas. Donald obtained his Doctor of Medicine from Northwestern University School of Medicine. A transformative spiritual experience during his medical studies had a profound effect on his life, leading him to a deeper understanding of God and God's presence and influence in our lives. After marrying Shirley in September 1950 and starting a family of four, Don and Shirley decided to leave the city life of Kansas City in search of a more child-friendly environment. Drawn by the presence of his brother's family in Billings, Don realized a significant need for psychiatrists in the area. He subsequently moved to Billings and established a psychiatry and neurology practice with Dr. Bryce Hughett, becoming the second psychiatrist in the city. Don attributes his success to being in the right place at the right time. He dedicated many years to advocating for improved mental health laws in Montana, working closely with lawmakers and government officials. He is particularly proud of his work with Dr. Hughett on legislation requiring legal representation for patients undergoing involuntary mental health commitment. This groundbreaking law was enacted on July 1, 1975. Throughout his career, Don held various positions in the field of mental health, including working in private practice, Director of the Mental Health Hygiene Clinic and the Mental Health Center in Billings, serving as a Medical Director of the Deaconess Psychiatric Unit and Montana Youth Treatment Center and physician for the Yellowstone Boys Ranch. Even after retirement, he continued to contribute to the field by working as a locum tenens physician and advocating for mental health causes. Don has been a dedicated community member, volunteering for initiatives like the Yellowstone Valley American Foundations for Suicide Prevention Walk and serving on the Mental Health Advisory Board. His lifelong commitment to improving mental health services and supporting his community has had a lasting impact. Don has always been a passionate advocate for the outdoors and environmental conservation. In his free time he enjoyed rafting on rivers like the Colorado and skiing on various slopes. A devoted family man, Don encouraged his children to actively participate in their communities and make positive choices in their lives. He is guided by his Christian Theophilosophy, believing in living life to the fullest, learning from the past and living with purpose for the future. His favorite quote is from Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce: "From where the sun now stand, I will fight no more forever!"



## Agnes Cremer 104 Years Old

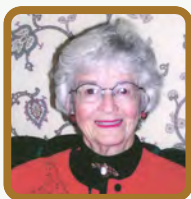
Agnes was born on February 12, 1920 in Jordan, Montana. She was able to complete her education through the 8th grade. In 1941 she married Robert Cremer. She has always expressed gratitude for Robert's safe return from WWII and the family they built together. A devoted homemaker, Agnes, has always found joy in family and community. She attributes her long life to her commitment to healthy eating, her decision to never smoke and her strong Christian beliefs. She currently resides in Miles City, Montana and is the last living sibling out of ten.



## Nyla Prosser 101 Years Old

Born in Linton, North Dakota on September 19, 1923, Nyla grew up on a small farm during the Great Depression. She and her siblings shared the responsibilities of farm labor, including chores like haying and milking cows. Nyla has always said that her brother would tell her they were poor, but they did not know it because everyone else was in the same boat. Despite her demanding upbringing, Nyla developed a love for music. She began singing at the young age of 3 and learned to play the piano by ear. At 11, she joined the adult choir at her local church and soon found herself performing with her sister at various churches throughout North Dakota. Their duo, known as the "Sweet Harmonies," became popular in the region. Nyla's musical talent also led her to audition for a local radio station, where she and her sister eventually hosted their own program on air. Nyla met her future husband, Kenneth, when she was 14. After he returned from serving in World War II, they married and had four children. Nyla worked in various roles, including as a dishwasher and nurse's aide, despite having only an eighth-grade education. Her family enjoyed camping and big family gatherings that included pinochle and camaraderie. Nyla's longevity can be attributed to her resilience and tenacity. While she didn't follow a strict diet or exercise regimen, her positive outlook and hard work ethic has undoubtedly contributed to her long and fulfilling life.





## Muriel Wild 100 Years Old

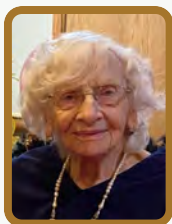
Muriel, born in Butte, Montana in 1924, graduated from Butte High and attended Montana State College. She fondly recalls growing up in the Columbia Gardens in Butte, which she believed shaped her into the person she is today. In 1948, she married John Wild and together they raised three children. Muriel became a Registered Dietitian and worked for the Rocky Mountain Development Council's Senior Nutrition Program in Helena. Grateful for her lifelong residence in Montana, she attributes her longevity to healthy living and "everything in moderation." Her guiding principle has been the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."



## Mary Marquez Sierra 100 Years Old

Mary was born in Los Angeles, California on September 7, 1924. She graduated from Garfield High School in California in 1943. During WWII she worked in an airplane factory. She spent most of her career in banking and dedicated 20 years to missionary work in Hawaii, Mexico and Browning where she founded a food bank. A pivotal moment in her life was witnessing her daughter's ability to have children, culminating in the birth of twins. In the 1980s, her daughter moved to Montana and Mary soon followed to assist with the twins. Mary discovered her artistic abilities in her 50s and began teaching painting to children, later organizing painting classes at the senior apartment complex where she lives. Mary has used her talents to give back to others, selling her paintings and holding yard sales to raise funds for those in need. She attributes her longevity to her healthy lifestyle, abstaining from drinking and smoking, and staying active through enjoyable pursuits.





## Rosie Riggins 100 Years Old

Rosie was born on May 19, 1924 in Butler Center, Iowa. She graduated from high school in 1941 and went on to earn a secretarial degree in 1943. She married Glen Riggins in 1949 and together they raised two children. Rosie worked in various administrative roles, including a ration office, a Chevrolet dealership and a county engineer's office. Notably, she was also the only female grain elevator manager in Iowa during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. In 2019, Rosie relocated to Montana to be closer to her family. She recalls witnessing the awe-inspiring sight of airplanes and the remarkable advancements in road infrastructure as some of the most significant events in her life. She attributes her longevity to her hardworking nature, keeping busy and maintaining an active lifestyle.



## Mickael Teig 108 Years Old

Born on May 17, 1916 on the family ranch near Lebo, Montana, Mickael Teig was the eighth of eleven children. Growing up under the shadow of the Crazy Mountains, he developed a deep love for the outdoors and a strong work ethic. Mickael was a polyglot, speaking both Norwegian and English by the age of six. He and his brother, Emmet, shared a passion for music, often entertaining locals with their accordion skills. Their musical talent was such that they could learn new songs by ear after just a few listens. Mickael married Betti Jane in 1954, and together they ranched near Martinsdale and Nihill. They were devoted to their Angus cattle and their land, working side by side for over five decades until Betti's passing in 2007. A lifelong Christian, Mickael continues to enjoy reading, especially mysteries, and watching the news. At the age of 100 he taught himself to play the violin. His secret to longevity? "Good Norwegian roots, hard work, and taking a good chew of snooze."



## William Hocker 100 Years Old

William was born on March 23, 1924 in Helena, Montana. Following high school, he and his childhood best friend enlisted in the Navy, but they were assigned to the Army instead. They served in WWII from 1944 to 1946 in Italy. After returning home, William married Phyllis in 1950, and together they raised seven children. He spent his life working as a farmer and still resides in the house where he grew up. William attributes his long life to maintaining a sense of humor and enjoying a bit of chocolate every day.



## MaryAnn Pitsch 100 Years Old

MaryAnn was born on April 11, 1924 in Sheridan, Wyoming. After high school, she worked as a telephone operator and did general office work. Following her marriage to Arthur, they purchased land in Montana. In early January 1951, they left Clearmont, Wyoming, in an old beet truck loaded with furniture and her piano, heading for the Little Big Horns on the Crow reservation. MaryAnn, her 2 year old son and 3.5 month-old daughter stayed upon arrival and her Arthur headed back for the second load. That first night, MaryAnn spent with her children, a few dozen mice and worries about intruders filled her mind - quite an adventure for a city girl from Sheridan. This marked the beginning of a 69-year stay on the farm before she moved to Billings at the age of 96. She cherished her life on the farm, despite her dislike for milking cows. MaryAnn considers the birth of her children and becoming Christian as the most significant events in her life. She often quotes, "And that's the way it went," "just us chickens," and "for crying in a bucket," and attributes her longevity to God's will.



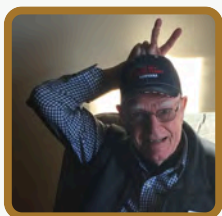
## Thelma Hogan 102 Years Old

Thelma was born on June 4, 1922 in Gurskoy, Norway. After moving to the United States, she graduated from Stadium High School in Tacoma, Washington. She married Ed Hogan in 1949, and together they left their hometowns - Tacoma, Washington and Magnus, Arkansas - to build a new life. During Ed's military service, they lived in various states, including Washington, North Carolina, Virginia, Alaska (twice), and Arizona, before settling in Missoula, Montana in 1966 near where Ed had been in a Civilian Conservation Corps camp as a teenager. Ed became the Army ROTC Sergeant Major at the University of Montana, while Thelma worked as a secretary and homemaker. She stayed active through gardening, cooking, volunteering, and maintaining connections with others. Even today, she walks to lunch and dinner at a brisk pace. Thelma attributes her longevity to a happy marriage and commitment to family. Her favorite quote, "The hurrier I go, the behinder I get."



## Loris Tangvik 102 Years Old

Loris was born on April 22, 1922 in Billings, Montana. She earned a Master's degree and became a third-grade teacher. In 1948, she married Frank Mettes, with whom she raised three children. In 1990, she married John Tangvik. Loris considers her upbringing, in Pineview, Montana, as the most remarkable experience of her life. Her favorite quote is, "May the Lord be with you," and she attributes her longevity to good genes, as her mother lived to be over 102.



## William Brown 102 Years Old

William was born on March 31, 1922, in Hope, Arkansas. His family relocated to Montana in search of new opportunities, where he pursued his education at a trade school and became a dedicated mortician. William has been blessed with three wonderful children and married Margie in 2009. He believes that the key to his longevity lies in taking vitamins daily and enjoying a scotch each evening. Reflecting on his life, William considers his adventures in sailboat racing to Hawaii and sailing to the Tahitian Islands as the most extraordinary experiences he's ever had. Known for his playful spirit, he delights in teasing and joking with everyone around him.



## Maria Niesslein 100 Years Old

Maria was born on September 12, 1924 Tlumacz, Poland. After WWII, she made a new start by moving to Canada and then to the United States. She lived in Van Nuys, California before settling in Stevensville, Montana. Throughout her life, Maria dedicated herself to being a loving homemaker. She is the proud mother of two, grandmother to four, great-grandmother to four, and great-great-grandmother to six cherished children. Maria credits her long and fulfilling life to her daily walks and a steady diet of oatmeal.





## Mary Ladas 100 Years Old

Mary was born on June 25, 1924, in Billings, Montana. She completed her formal education at the age of 13. During WWII, she worked as a "Rosie the Riveter" in California, a job she cherished. Mary was among the first women employed at the Billings Sugar Beet Factory and later held positions as a secretary at Shell Oil, Senior High School, the Billings Courthouse, and as a copywriter for a radio station. She married Louis Ladas, and together they raised a family. Mary was ahead of her time in house flipping, skillfully remodeling and designing homes before it became popular. She regularly donated blood until she was deemed too old to continue. Passionate about cooking and baking Greek dishes, her secret to longevity included a daily glass of wine and following a Mediterranean diet. Mary considered seeing the Rockettes perform in 1953 a highlight of her life. Her favorite quote is, "Hasta la vista, baby!"



## Laura Gee 102 Years Old

Laura was born on December 28, 1921. She proudly earned her GED to complete her high school education. Laura married Victor Gee, and together they raised two daughters, Judy and Linda. Her greatest joy in life was becoming a mother and later a grandmother. Laura had a passion for reading and spent much of her time studying natural remedies and herbs. She loved music and dancing, faithfully attending the Northwestern fiddlers contest for over 30 years straight. She believes the secret to a long life is simple: coffee, candy, and a little dancing.



## Hannah Dorothy Neibauer Taylor 100 Years Old

Dorothy was born on August 17, 1924, in Billings, Montana. She went to business college and later married Robert Austin Taylor, a US Navy serviceman, during WWII. She felt very fortunate to have attended business school in Billings when her parents had so many demands with a large family. Throughout her life, Dorothy dedicated herself to being a homemaker and raising her family. As the eldest of eight siblings, all of whom have since passed away, she enjoys playing bridge and is known for her sharp mind. A chocolate enthusiast, her favorite quote is, "Is that new?"



## Minnie Hirst 100 Years Old

Minnie was born on March 3, 1924, in Birch Creek, Montana, where she grew up surrounded by the love of her family. She lost her father when she was just 17, but she always cherished the memories of him playing his fiddle during the long winter evenings. She and her sisters would dance to his music, a memory that stayed close to her heart. Minnie, also loved the weekend dances at the neighbor's homes, where the community came together to share joy. In 1946, Minnie married Clarence Hirst, and together they lovingly raised eight children. Despite the demands of a large family, Minnie was full of life and energy. She had a passion for fishing and trapping beaver and mink, and she loved to travel—especially her annual trips to Jackpot, Nevada. Walking with her dog and cat, playing bingo, and knitting sweaters for her loved ones were some of the simple pleasures she enjoyed most. Minnie often reflects on her life, acknowledging the hardships of the early years, but she never lost hope. She believed that better days were always ahead. Her resilience and optimism were a testament to the strength she inherited from her mother and sisters, all of whom lived to be between 90 and 100 years old.





## William "Chuck" Hubing Jr. 100 Years Old

William "Chuck" was born on September 7, 1924 in Glendive, Montana. When Chuck was a kid, he traveled with his dad, Will, a livestock buyer throughout eastern Montana. Will and Chuck bought horses, cows, sheep and whatever else requested from contacts Will had in Wisconsin and back East. Around the age 14, Chuck quit school and went to work for Haughian Livestock, a huge cattle and sheep ranch between Miles City and Terry. Times were hard during the 30s and 40s, and there were few fences from Miles City to Terry extending north to Brockway/Circle area and beyond. Those wide-open spaces were home to bunches of wild horses. To earn extra money, Chuck and his friends, a wild bunch of cowboys, would gather the wild horses and trail them to the Conlin Corrals or Brockway Stockyards. At that time, the Brockway Stockyards was one of the largest shipping hubs in eastern Montana. The horses were then sorted, depending upon the needs of the buyers back east, and shipped by train to locations throughout the United States, and even on to Europe. It was truly the Wild West in as these cowboys were most often riding barely trained horses and gathering wild, unbroken horses on the open range. Trying to stop a large herd of wild horses with no fences to slow them down was dangerous at best. Chuck did not inherit a ranch or cattle or a business. He started out as a hired man. Slowly, he gathered together a few cows, horses and sheep. He married a hometown girl and had three daughters. Because he couldn't afford to buy a ranch as a young man, he leased grazing pastures and small ranches all over eastern Montana and western North Dakota expanding his herd. In the late 60s, Chuck and a group of Montana ranchers were involved in a ranching operation in Australia. Chuck made several trips to Australia where he and his partners gathered wild cattle, which were free for the taking. He discovered that the wild cattle, especially bulls, were harder to gather in Australia than his early days of rounding up wild horses in eastern Montana. In 1969, Chuck and Charlotte leased a ranch south of Broadus on the Little Powder River. In 1974, they purchased the ranch and set out to increase their herd and improve the land. Over the years the C & C Cattle Company developed an expansive water system on nearly 36 sections of land and cleared flats, hillsides and river bottoms of sagebrush in an effort to increase their hay production. In 2012, they sold the ranch and retired to Miles City. In 2013, Chuck was inducted into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame. Chuck has lived a big life and widened his horizons along the way whether stepping out of a hotel in Paris or walking for coffee in the Middle East, his cowboy boots and cowboy hat are as distinctive as he is.



## Inez Pounds 102 Years Old

Inez was born on September 8, 1922, in Charlo, Montana, and graduated from Charlo High School. Inez married Elmer Freshour on August 20, 1942, and they were married for an impressive 52 years. After Elmer's passing, she married Carl Pounds in 2000, and they were together for 11 years. Inez has three children. She dedicated herself to being a homemaker while actively engaging in various community service activities. Her secret to her long life revolves around factors like inheritance, maintaining a healthy diet, cherishing family bonds, fostering love, upholding faith, and finding happiness in life. In her later years, Inez made the decision to move into a house with five of her sisters when she was 90 years old. This experience has been described as wonderful, with a harmonious living arrangement where everyone contributed and supported each other. She and her youngest sister are still living together.



## Leonard Dahl 101 Years Old

Leonard Dahl was born on September 19, 1923, in North Gate, North Dakota. His family moved to Montana when he was a child. When Leonard was in high school, Pearl Harbor was attacked. Upon graduating at the end of that year, he joined the Army. They didn't send him to his first duty assignment until 1943. He was sent to New Caledonia and assigned to the 43rd Infantry Division. Soon he was in combat in New Guinea. In 1944 he was sent to the Philippines awaiting orders to be part of the impending invasion of Japan. Then the atom bombs were dropped on Japan and the war was over. After the Army, Leonard received his B.A. in Accounting from the University of Montana. There he laid eyes on his future wife, Marguerite. After graduating from college, he took a job in Great Falls. Soon Marguerite was also hired by the same company. After a while he got up the nerve to ask her out and the rest was history. They have been married for 73 years. They have endured many ups and downs in the economy and lots of social changes. Nevertheless, they were able to deal with even the hardest of times and always moved as a couple, devoted and dedicated to one another.



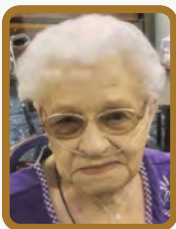
## Marklyn Lynn 100 Years Old

Marklyn's journey began in Cincinnati, Ohio, on April 2, 1924. She graduated from high school in Milford, Ohio and then attended Chatfield College. Marklyn and Daniel exchanged vows in Rhode Island in February 1944, and their love blossomed with the arrival of their two children, Danny and Chris. Marklyn's dedication to her community shone through her 20 years as a librarian and her 42 years as a Girl Scout Troop Leader. A chance vacation to Reed Point, Montana, led to a lifelong connection, and she and Daniel eventually settled in Nye, Red Lodge, and Laurel. Marklyn's love for books was evident in her 17 years at the Red Lodge Book Store. Nature and adventure filled Marklyn's heart. Camping and horseback riding were her passions. She found the greatest joy in the simple moments of life: marriage, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and the incredible experiences of traveling to 15 countries, including Spain, New Zealand, and Morocco. Marklyn's secret to longevity is a positive outlook and a focus on happiness and the enduring power of relationships.



## Lola VanCampen 107 Years Old

Lola was born on January 7, 1917 in Idaho. She attended college at the University of Idaho and became a teacher. Lola married Ned VanCampen and together they raised three children. At the age of 93, she relocated to Montana to live with her daughter. She attributes her long life to her active lifestyle, often saying that the human body was meant to move. A devout woman of faith, Lola finds solace and strength in prayer. She believes in its power for her loved ones and will hold onto that belief until her last breath.



## Virginia Olson 102 Years Old

Virginia Olson was born on October 10, 1921, in Wales, North Dakota. She completed her education through the 8th grade which was considered normal at the time for girls.

Virginia's life took an interesting turn when she visited an aunt and uncle in Portland, Oregon. Through a friend in North Dakota, she was able to secure a job in the shipyards, which were highly sought-after positions at the time. It was during this period that she met her future husband, Walter Olson, at a Chamber of Commerce dance. However, their budding romance faced a temporary separation when Walter had to leave for the war. Fortunately, after his return, they reunited and decided to tie the knot on April 28, 1947.

Walter's father, Elis Olson, asked Virginia and Walter to return to the family ranch in Warrick, Montana. They spent many happy years there, raising four children together.

Throughout her life, Virginia had a love for various activities, such as playing Pinochle and Bingo. She also enjoyed fishing and was an avid crocheter. Virginia considers the most amazing part of her life to be her marriage to Walter. In terms of her approach to longevity, Virginia emphasizes the importance of a good diet, including wholesome garden foods and Montana beef. Her favorite quote, "just live a good, clean life," reflects her simple and positive outlook on life. Even in her later years, Virginia remains active and engaged in her community. She regularly attends the Chinook Senior Center on Thursdays for lunch, visiting with friends, and playing Bingo. The staff at the center notes that she always wears a smile and brings joy to those around her.





## Lester Rutledge Jr. 100 Years Old

Lester Rutledge's story began on June 12, 1924, in the rugged beauty of Big Sandy, Montana. His family's journey to the West started in 1910, when they joined the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act and settled near Big Sandy. Despite the challenges of dryland farming, the Rutledge and Weller families built a resilient life. Their farm continues to thrive today, a testament to their enduring legacy. Growing up on the farm, Lester developed a deep appreciation for the land and a healthy lifestyle. He served his country in the Army from 1943 to 1946, joining the 222nd Infantry 42nd Rainbow Division. His experiences in Central Europe and Germany left an indelible mark on his life. In 1945, he was part of the division that liberated the prisoners at Dachau Nazi concentration camp. The horrors of that day, witnessing the liberation of 30,000 prisoners, forever shaped his perspective and the lives of the soldiers who were there. Lester's dedication to education led him to earn a Bachelor's degree from the University of Montana and advanced degrees (Ph.D.) from the University of Washington and the University of Utah. He spent 32 years teaching Physiology and Neurology at the University of Michigan Medical School. Upon retirement, he returned to Montana and served as a Deputy Sheriff in Ravalli County. He also actively contributed to the community through his involvement with the Bitterroot Water Forum and the Bitterroot Land Trust. Lester's commitment to sustainability was unwavering. He believed in raising awareness about climate change and taking practical steps to make a difference. Replacing his yard with native Montana plants, making environmentally friendly purchases, recycling, and conserving energy were just a few ways he lived his values. Lester's longevity was a testament to his dedication to a healthy lifestyle. He prioritized maintaining a healthy weight, finding passions that fueled his spirit, and managing stress. By practicing moderation and mindfulness, he created a fulfilling and enduring life.



## Mary Ada Gebhardt 100 Years Old

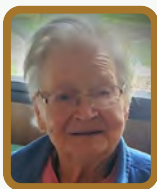
Mary Gebhardt was born on August 18, 1924, in the charming town of Drummond, Montana. At the tender age of thirteen, Mary faced a life-threatening ordeal when her appendix burst. Dr. Wilcox rushed to her side, transporting her to Missoula, in his own car, for urgent medical care. Despite the dire prognosis, Mary defied the odds, spending 42 and a half days in the Great Northern Hospital. Her father's unwavering love and support ensured she received the best care possible as he hired dedicated nurses to tend to her every need. After completing high school, Mary furthered her education at Great Falls Commercial College for seven months. In December 1962, she married Lawrence Gebhardt, embarking on a journey of love and companionship. Mary's professional career flourished as an accountant at the ASCS. One of the most cherished moments in Mary's life was the end of World War II. She recalls the overwhelming joy, patriotism, and celebration that swept across the nation. She remembers the flags waving proudly everywhere. It was a time of profound national unity. Mary credits her to longevity to her unwavering faith in God.



## Violet Ekle 100 Years Old

Violet Ekle, born in Red Lodge, Montana, on July 4, 1924. She married Stanley Ekle in July of 1942. Together they raised a family of six children. Violet dedicated three decades to working at Stillwater Community Hospital. A highlight of her life was celebrating her 100th birthday with a grand parade. She attributes dancing and walking as her secrets to longevity.





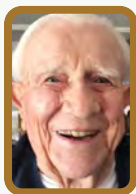
## Elsie Mickelson 102 Years Old

Elsie Mickelson was born on February 8, 1922, in the quaint town of South Haven, Minnesota. Her parents, Peter and Ellen Keldsen, had journeyed there from their homestead near Westby, Montana, to await her arrival. Returning to Westby in the spring of 1922, Elsie grew up surrounded by the beauty of the Montana countryside. After graduating from Westby High School in 1940, Elsie pursued her education at Spokane School of Business, honing her accounting skills. In December 1941, she married the love of her life, Harold Mickelson, and together they built a beautiful family of seven children. Looking back on her extraordinary life, Elsie shares a sense of wonder and gratitude. From the simple days of oxen carts in Westby to the monumental achievement of landing a man on the moon, she has witnessed incredible progress. Elsie's secret to longevity is a testament to her healthy lifestyle—she never smoked, drank sparingly, and always sought the guidance of trusted medical professionals.



## Bill Luscombe 100 Years Old

Bill Luscombe was born on December 15, 1924, in Ada County, Idaho. He served his country with honor in the U.S. Coast Guard, and in 1948, he found his lifelong partner in Billie. Together, they built a loving family and welcomed a child into their lives. Bill dedicated his life to the open road, driving trucks. His travels brought him to the beautiful state of Montana, where he found a new home. In 1972, Bill discovered his true passion—the game of billiards. He honed his skills and became a formidable player. He continues to compete in three leagues and plays three times a week. Bill's favorite quotes are, "Practice with a purpose, play with a passion" and "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." He attributes his longevity to a combination of luck and good genes.



## William E. Brown 100 Years Old

William Edward Brown, born September 8, 1924 in Belfry, Montana, served in the Navy in the South Pacific from 1942 to 1946. After marrying Helen in 1946, they raised five children. Bill had a varied career, including stints at Billings Motor, Buick, owned a California dealership and the Rainbow Motel in Livingston. He retired to Sequim, Washington, before returning to Montana in 2004. Bill credits his longevity to good genes.



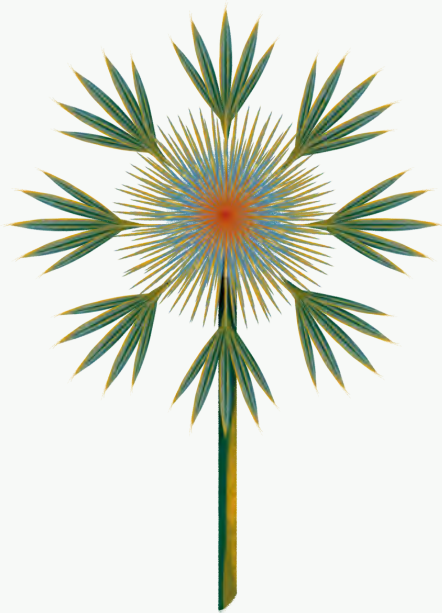
## Francies Poulos 105 Years Old

Francies was born on April 28, 1919 in Wolf Point, Montana. She served her country as a photo developer in the WAC AirCorp during WWII. Upon moving to Atlanta, Georgia she found love with Nick Poulos. Together, they pursued their dreams, Francies excelling with degrees in law and accounting, and Nick graduating from Georgia Tech as a Ceramic Engineer. Nick's groundbreaking work at the High Temperature Research Lab led to the development of a revolutionary material that would shield spacecraft from the fiery embrace of Earth's atmosphere upon reentry. Francies and Nick eventually returned to her Montana roots, settling in Billings in 1994. Francies says the secret to her longevity is not dwelling on her age and not worrying about the little things.



“Trust me friend 100  
years goes faster than  
you think. So don’t  
blink.”

-Kenny Chesney





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